

HB 1994 -- PALLIATIVE CARE

SPONSOR: Cornejo

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass by Consent" by the Standing Committee on Health and Mental Health Policy by a vote of 9 to 0. Voted "Do Pass by Consent" by the Select Committee on Rules by a vote of 7 to 0.

This bill establishes the Missouri Palliative Care and Quality of Life Interdisciplinary Council within the Department of Health and Senior Services to be a palliative care consumer and professional information and education program to improve quality and delivery of patient-centered and family-focused care in Missouri. Members shall be appointed to the council on or before December 1, 2016. The members include two members of the Senate appointed by the President Pro Tem, two members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House, and other specified members.

The council members must serve a three year term without compensation, but, subject to appropriations, must be reimbursed for their actual and necessary expenses incurred as a member of the council. The council must consult with and advise the department on matters related to the establishment, maintenance, operation, and outcomes evaluation of palliative care initiatives in Missouri and submit an annual report to the General Assembly that includes an assessment of the availability of palliative care in Missouri as specified.

The bill establishes the Palliative Care Consumer and Professional Information and Education Program within the department, with the purpose of maximizing the effectiveness of palliative care in Missouri by ensuring that comprehensive and accurate information and education about palliative care is available to the public, health care providers, and health care facilities. The department must publish on its website information and resources, including links to external resources, about palliative care, including specified information.

The bill encourages each hospital in Missouri to have a palliative care presence on its Intranet or Internet website and palliative care patient education information available for distribution to patients.

The department must consult with the council in implementing the provisions of the bill.

The provisions of this bill expire August 28, 2022.

This bill is the same as HB 808 (2015).

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that there are persistent gaps in care for individuals near the end of their life that require urgent attention from numerous stakeholder groups. Every medical organization now recognizes that management of illness includes early management, not just at end of life. Palliative care improves the quality of life for patients and families of patients who are experiencing pain and other symptoms and side effects associated with chronic disease. The Missouri Palliative Care and Quality of Life Interdisciplinary Council can help to answer important questions, including how effective current policies and procedures are and what is needed to better serve patients' desires.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Cornejo; American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network; Missouri Academy Of Family Physicians; St. Luke Health System; BJC Healthcare; Bristol-Myers Squibb Company; Oxford Health Care; SSM Health Care; and Missouri Hospital Association.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.